



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

"THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS"

AT THE 73RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation commends you for the efficient manner you have been steering the affairs of this Meeting and we are grateful to the Secretary-General for his Report, which outlines United Nations Rule of Law developments and activities at the national and international levels over the past year.

2. Nigeria's delegation wishes to align itself with the statements delivered by the Representatives of the Gambia and the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the African Group and Non-Aligned Movement respectively. Every aspect of human endeavour and development effort are linked to or related to the rule of law. It is, therefore, imperative that dissemination of rule of law by the United Nations is given priority.

3. The Declaration of the High-Level Summit on the Rule of Law at the National and International levels adopted at the 67th Session of the General Assembly provides us with the normative framework to address this all important subject. Issues relating to democracy, good governance, accountability, peacekeeping operations, countering impunity, protection of civilians particularly women and children in armed conflict, countering terrorism and transnational crimes, are all connected to respect for and observance of the rule of law. The observance of the rule of law is indispensable in the realms of social and economic development, political representation and participation, security and public order as well.

4. Adherence to the rule of law is necessary, especially in the international system, to regulate the behaviours of States and hold them in accord with higher ideals and standards for the attainment of peace and development, as embodied in the UN Charter. There is always a connecting link between the rule of law and other issues on the agenda of the UN, including the post-2015 Development Agenda and thematic issues such as women, peace and security. The General Assembly, the Security Council and the wider United Nations system have been rightly seized with this cardinal subject over the years.

Mr. Chairman,

5. All the instruments, norms and principles that govern the rule of law, namely: the provisions of the UN Charter, UN conventions and treaties, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), provisions of international human rights and humanitarian law, customary international law, national legislation and acts of States have proved beneficial to peaceful co-existence. Equally pertinent to the rule of law and peaceful co-existence are time - honoured principles such as respect for sovereignty, integrity and independence of states, peaceful resolution of disputes in preference to the resort to war as a means of their settlement, respect of self -determination of peoples under foreign colonial occupation, as well as the right to development, especially free from fear, pressure, sanctions or negative consequences.

6. As respect for and observance of the rule of law are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, there are corresponding regional and sub-regional instruments in Africa embedded in the AU Constitutive Act and ECOWAS protocols. The rule of law is also a fundamental article in Nigeria's national jurisprudence.

7. Nigeria considers the rule of law as a fundamental prerequisite for the establishment of justice and as a basis for peaceful co-existence and the prevention of armed conflict. Therefore, we envision the promotion of the rule of law at all levels as a vital means of strengthening cooperation, establishing enduring peace and security within and amongst states.

8. We have consistently demonstrated our respect for the rule of law, both at the national and international levels. As a country governed by a written constitution (1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended), Nigeria remains committed to a process of governance that is firmly anchored on democratic principles. The Constitution provides the basis for a 'Rule of Law' approach to governance at the national level. We appreciate the connection between the rule of law and democracy and the primacy of the rule of law as a prerequisite for the promotion and protection of democracy, good governance, and sustainable development.

9. Furthermore, the robust policy of Nigeria on gender issues is another testimony to its adherence to the rule of law at the national level. This policy particularly focuses on

women empowerment as well as elimination of discriminatory practices that are harmful to women. There has, for instance, been tremendous progress towards parity in primary school education in Nigeria. The constitution of Nigeria (1999 as amended), prohibits discrimination on any grounds, including gender.

Mr. Chairman,

10. We have also demonstrated strong political will to fulfill our international obligations through the domestication of relevant international instruments and recommended practices such as: the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act 2011, to promote open government; the Terrorism Prevention Act of 2011 and the Money Laundering Prohibition Act of 2011, to give impetus to the global fight against terrorism, terrorist financing and economic crimes.

11. Our Judicial system has continued to play a pivotal role in the advancement and elaboration of the rights of the people through effective oversight over the actions of both the executive and the legislative arms of government. The role of the judiciary as the final arbiter among the three branches of government and in the electoral process has created an enabling environment for peace and stability to thrive in Nigeria.

12. Judicial decisions against the government are complied with as a matter of routine and constitutional obligation, thus laying a firm foundation for the institutionalization of the rule of law at the national level.

In addition, the work of the various anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Nigeria Police Force, (NPF) and the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal, are meant to ensure that 'due process' is always observed. This is in recognition of the importance of the rule of law in the society.

13. At the international level, Nigeria has consistently pursued a foreign policy anchored on the promotion and achievement of global security, as well as the protection of the dignity of all persons. Nigeria recognizes the important role of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and other international tribunals in the peaceful resolution of international disputes. Adherence to the ICJ ruling on the land and maritime border dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon amply illustrates Nigeria's commitment to the rule of law at the international level; while our support for peacekeeping since our independence in 1960 are expressions of our commitments to international peace and security, including the rule law.

14. Nigeria appreciates the sustained initiative of the United Nations to promote the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies all over the world. We commend the Secretary-General for his unwavering advocacy and support for the rule of law. Addressing the global rule of law deficit should be considered an imperative for all; but without the strengthening of the rule of law at the international level,

there will be no platform upon which the rule of law would stand at the international level. Therefore, member states should collectively work to attain a world where the rule of law, accountability and social justice are the foundation for sustainable development and durable peace. This must be made a priority for the international community, for world leaders and for all peoples.

I thank you for your attention.